

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6145

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AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR EG IS JO

SUBJ: INITIAL EGYPTIAN REACTION TO KIRYAT SHMONA

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED:

1. CAIRO PRESS APRIL 12 SPLASHES KIRYAT SHMONA STORY. BANNER HEADLINES PLAY UP "SUICIDAL FEDAYEEN ATTACK". AHRAM PRINTS TWO PICTURES; ONE, SPREADING OVER THREE COLUMNS, SHOWS ISRAELI SOLDIERS WITH BODY OF IDF COMRADE. IN GENERAL, STORIES SQUARE WITH WIRE SERVICE REPORTS, WITH ADDITION OF A VERY FEW EMOTIVE ADJECTIVES: E.G. FIVE "HEROIC" HOURS. PFLP GENERAL COMMAND SPOKESMAN IS QUOTED AS SAYING FEDAYEEN HAD CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS BLOW UP THEMSELVES AND THEIR HOSTAGES IF ISRAELIS TRIED TO STORM BUILDING. AHRAN PRINTS OFFICIAL DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S CONDEMNATION OF ATTACK.

2. NO NEWSPAPER HAS COMMENTARY OR EDITORIAL ON ATTACK. GOE HAS SO FAR MADE NO STATEMENT ABOUT IT. END UNCLASSIFIED.

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BEGIN LOU

3. COMMENT: KIRYAT SHMONA MASSACRE IS CLEARLY PERCEIVED HERE JUST AS AHMAD JABRIL INTENDED IT TO BE, I.E. AS OPERATION AIMED AT SPOILING CURRENT SETTLEMENT EFFORTS. NEVERTHELESS, HOWEVER MUCH GOE, AND EGYPTIAN LEADERS PERSONALLY, MAY DEPLORE BOTH BARBARITY AND PURPOSE OF ATTACK, IT IS IMPORTANT TO RECALL COMPASSION FELT HERE FOR DISPOSSESSED PALESTINIANS, AND PARTICULARLY FOR GENERATION WHICH HAS NEVER SEEN "HOMELAND". THUS, FOR EXAMPLE, OUR SENIOR LOCAL POLITICAL ASSISTANT, A COPT AND SOPHISTICATED SUPPORTER OF SADAT, TOLD US ONE CAN NOT HELP BUT ADMIRE DESPERATE COURAGE OF SUICIDE SQUAD. IN SHORT, WHAT EGYPTIANS WOULD REGARD AS INHUMAN BRUTALITY IN ANY OTHER CONTEXT THEY SEEK TO EXCUSE WHEN PERPETRATORS ARE PALESTINIAN. HYSTERIA OF SOME PALESTINIANS, THEY SAY, STEMS FROM DESPERATION GENERATED BY ISRAELI INHUMANITY. HOWEVER MUCH WE MAY DEPLORE THIS LINE OF THOUGHT, WE CAN BE SURE THAT EGYPTIANS WILL SEEK EXCUSES FOR FEDAYEEN ATROCITIES.
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